AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Original) A method of decontaminating, disinfecting or sterilizing an article which method comprises placing the article in an electrolytic system with an oxygenated electrolyte and applying a potential difference to the electrolytic system.

2. (Original) A method according to claim 1 wherein the method is a method of sterilizing an article.

3. (Currently Amended) A method according to ~~either~~ claim 1 ~~or claim 2~~ wherein the article is a medical instrument.

4. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ wherein the article is a surgical instrument.

5. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1~~any one of the preceding claims~~ wherein the article comprises stainless steel.

6. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1~~any one of the preceding claims~~ wherein the article comprises the cathode of the electrolytic system.

7. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1~~any one of the preceding claims~~ wherein the electrolyte is an aqueous solution of sodium phosphate, sodium chloride, sodium sulphate, sodium hydrogen carbonate, orthoborate or citrate.

8. (Original) A method according to claim 7 wherein the electrolyte is an aqueous solution of sodium hydrogen carbonate.

9. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1~~any one of the preceding claims~~ wherein the electrolyte is either neutral or alkaline.

10. (Original) A method according to claim 9 wherein the pH of the electrolyte is substantially 7.

11. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1~~any one of the preceding claims~~ wherein the electrolyte is aerated prior to use.

12. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1~~any one of the preceding claims~~ wherein the electrolyte is aerated during the electrolysis.

13. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1~~any one of the preceding claims~~ wherein the oxygen content of the oxygenated electrolyte is from 1 to 100%.

14. (Original) A method according to claim 13 wherein the oxygen content of the oxygenated electrolyte is from 50 to 100%.

15. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1~~any one of the preceding claims~~ wherein the potential difference applied to the electrolytic system is from -1.50 to 0.25 V compared with or versus the standard silver electrode (SSE).

16. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim ~~14~~ 15 wherein the potential difference is from -1.25 to -0.5 V compared with or versus the standard silver electrode (SSE).

17. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1~~any one of the preceding claims~~ wherein the potential difference is applied to the electrolytic system for up to 36 hours.

18. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 17~~any one of claims 16~~ wherein the potential is applied for 6 to 24 hours.

19. (Original) Use of a reactive oxygen species in the decontamination, disinfection or sterilization of an article.

20. (Original) Use according to claim 19 in the sterilization of an article.

21. (Currently Amended) Use according to ~~either~~ claim 19 ~~or claim 20~~ wherein the reactive oxygen species comprises one or more of the superoxide ion ($O_2^{-\bullet}$), the hydroxyl radical ($OH^{\bullet}$) and hydrogen peroxide(H_2O_2).

22. (Original) Use according to claim 21 wherein one of the reactive oxygen species is the hydroxyl radical or the superoxide ion.

23. (Original) A decontamination, disinfection or sterilization apparatus which comprises an electrolytic system with an oxygenated electrolyte.

24. (Cancelled)

25. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to ~~either claims~~claim 23 ~~or 24~~ which comprises a container with a detachable lid.

26. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 25 which comprises a container with a lid and wherein part of the circuit wire of the electrolytic system is in the lid such that the circuit is completed when the lid is placed on the container and broken when it is removed.

27. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim ~~any one of claims~~ 23 ~~to~~ ~~26~~ wherein the cathode of the electrolytic system is the article to be sterilized.

28. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim ~~any one of claims 23 to 26~~ which comprises means for passing current through the article to be decontaminated, disinfected or sterilized such that, in use, the article acts as the cathode of the electrolytic system.

29. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim ~~any one of claims 23 to 26~~ wherein the article to be decontaminated, disinfected or sterilized is held between the anode and the cathode of the electrolytic system.

30. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 29 wherein the article is held in a holder attached to the lid.

31. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to ~~either~~ claim 29 ~~or claim 30~~ wherein the holder is made of non-conductive plastic mesh.

32. (Currently Amended) A decontamination, disinfection or sterilization apparatus for performing a method as described in ~~any one of claims~~claim 1 ~~to 18~~.

33. (New) A decontamination, disinfection or sterilization apparatus which comprises an electrolytic system which, in use, comprises an oxygenated electrolyte.

34. (New) A method according to claim 1 wherein the article is a contact lens.